



MEDIA RELEASE

IT'S A DRY YEAR – WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR WATER CONSERVATION?

SANTA BARBARA, CA – May 14, 2012

It is a dry year; the City's rainfall to date is 11 inches, far below the annual average of 18 inches. Because we live in a semi-arid climate it is common to have a dry year. One dry year does not mean we have a water shortage, but it does reinforce the need to always manage our water supplies to prepare for a prolonged drought.

Fortunately, the City has a diverse water supply portfolio. The City's primary water supply is Lake Cachuma, which spilled last year and is currently 90% full. Another significant water source is Gibraltar Reservoir, which also filled last year, and is currently near capacity. State Water, groundwater, and recycled water also add to our available water supplies.

The City manages its water supplies to plan for a six-year dry period and resulting water shortage. When Lake Cachuma stops spilling, we assume we are in the first year of a drought and begin planning for a prolonged dry weather scenario. We do this by saving water from the various supplies so they will be available in later years of a drought.

So what does that mean for water conservation? The City's Water Conservation Program offers incentives and assistance for water conservation. We rely on our customers to conserve water consistently to achieve long-term water savings. This is what allows us to have the "extra" water to save for prolonged drought. In the fourth year of drought, the City does count on extraordinary water conservation to bridge the gap between supply & demand.

The City is grateful to our customers for all they have done to save water. By saving water, we are doing the right thing for Santa Barbara and ensuring water is available for future generations. The City offers many opportunities for you to reap the benefits to conserving water: saving money and time, keeping your landscape beautiful and protecting the environment. For details on all the City offers for water conservation, go to www.SaveWaterSB.org or call 564-5460.

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